Fiftieth Anniversary

American Congregational Association

1903.

938.3 Am 3

Columbia University
in the City of New York

Library

GIVEN BY

Publisher

REV. GEORGE A. GORDON

CELEBRATION OF

THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

AMERICAN CONGREGATIONAL ASSOCIATION

IN TREMONT TEMPLE, BOSTON
MONDAY, MAY TWENTY-FIFTH
MCMIII, AT SEVEN-THIRTY P.M.

BOSTON
THE AMERICAN CONGREGATIONAL ASSOCIATION
MCMIII

NOTE

The date of the jubilee meeting coincided with that of the May festival of the Boston Congregational Club. When this became known, the Club generously voted to give up the festival and unite with the Association to celebrate its anniversary. Committees were appointed on both sides, and all the arrangements were made and carried out with the utmost harmony. At their first meeting subsequent to the jubilee the directors of the Association passed the following votes:

"That grateful acknowledgment is hereby made by the American Congregational Association to Rev. George A. Gordon, D.D., for the very great and valuable service rendered to Congregationalism in our land by his most interesting address at the fiftieth anniversary of the Association in Tremont Temple on May 25, 1903."

"That Dr. Gordon be requested to furnish a copy of the address for publication."

"That the thanks of the Association be given to the Boston Congregational Club for its invaluable assistance and hearty coöperation in carrying out to so happy a conclusion the public meeting of its fiftieth anniversary."

"*Whereas*, the fiftieth meeting of the Association was greatly indebted for its success to the musical numbers so efficiently rendered by the combined choirs of the Shawmut Church, Boston, and the Eliot Church, Newton,

"*Resolved*, that the hearty thanks of the Association be given to these organizations, with special acknowledgment to Mr. Henry M. Dunham and Mr. Everett E. Truette, their leaders, for their kind services."

HISTORICAL SKETCH

of the

American Congregational Association

(Condensed from the Fiftieth Annual Report)

On the twenty-fifth of May, 1853, in the Old South Chapel, Boston, an addition was made to the happy family of anniversary week by the birth of this Society, whose name, for the first eleven years of its life, was the Congregational Library Association.

This last fact indicates the idea prominent in the minds of the founders. An earnest, united effort was needed to preserve the early religious literature of New England, which was scattered in thousands of garrets and was fast perishing. So thought Parsons Cooke, Julius A. Palmer, Joseph S. Clark, and others who launched the undertaking. With the advent of Rufus Anderson among the leading spirits, during the first year, the object of the Association was broadened. A charter was secured, early in 1854, which announced the double object of a Congregational Library and of a building for its use and that of charitable societies.

It was a day of small things. Every one acknowledged the importance of the double function for which the Association stood, yet very few were found to render the indispensable aid. Dr. Joseph S. Clark, the faithful Corresponding Secretary, labored with unwearied diligence to stir up churches and in-

dividuals with the call, "Arise and build." He met with fair success in collecting books and pamphlets, but with a very discouraging reception to his constant plea for the money needed for a building.

The Old South Chapel was never the home of the Association; only the place of some of its first annual business meetings. In 1853, a small room in the old Tremont Temple was rented as headquarters. This was soon filled to overflowing with books and pamphlets. In 1857, the Association bought the Judge Jackson estate, No. 23 Chauncy Street. It covered about 4,500 feet of land, cost $25,000, and was mortgaged for $13,000. During that year the country was visited by its greatest financial panic, and the fragile bark of this enterprise was all but swamped in the hurricane. Two generous friends of the Association, Alpheus Hardy and Abner Kingman, came to the rescue and gave their individual notes to secure the Association's loan. The building was held; but nothing could be spent for many years upon books or for the services of a financial agent. Dr. Clark gave his labors freely, but just as they seemed about to be successful came the storm of civil war, and hope was again deferred.

In 1864, the Association secured an enlargement of its charter and a change of name to that which it has always borne since. The National Council held at Boston in 1865 heartily endorsed the plan for a worthy Congregational House. Rev. Dr. Isaac P. Langworthy, who had been chosen Secretary and Librarian after Dr. Clark's death in 1861, employed his time and energies in the great work of collecting the necessary funds.

In 1867, the Chauncy Street house was sold for a little more than double the purchase price; rooms at No. 40 Winter Street were rented, and efforts for an appropriate Congregational House were more eagerly prosecuted. But very little money could be secured until 1870, when the denomination was aroused to celebrate the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims. Among the chief objects brought into prominence was the work of this Association. There was a wide if not deep response from churches and individuals; the impetus of the movement lasted through the next two years, and it began to look as though Congregationalism would secure the needed centripetal force. Then came in swift succession three staggering blows: the Chicago fire of 1871, which made so great a shrinkage in Boston capital; the Boston fire of 1872; and the monetary stringency of 1873. The best that could be done was to secure the two old buildings at the corner of Beacon and Somerset Streets, and to adapt them as well as possible, by various changes and additions, to the purposes of the Association.

Dr. Langworthy was the leading spirit through all this period, and for many years after; to him, more than to any other one man, it is probable that our present relative prosperity is due. The varied machinery set in motion directly or indirectly by him produced in the end fully a hundred thousand dollars, and in 1873 he had the satisfaction of removing the property of the Association from Winter Street to the "Congregational House."

The latter half of our fifty years is so fresh in

memory that it can be treated summarily. The new location brought the benevolent societies and the library together for the first time, but there were new difficulties to face. The building had cost $425,000, and had been mortgaged for $200,000; it was soon found necessary to put on a further mortgage of $50,000. For five years the debt remained at $250,000, with no prospect of its reduction. But in 1879, mainly through the earnest efforts and liberal gifts of Samuel D. Warren and Rufus S. Frost, $30,000 was secured by subscription, and thus the sharpest corner was turned, and the last nine years of Dr. Langworthy's life were relieved from his chief anxiety as to the success of what he called "his last and tenderly loved work."

This faithful servant of the Association passed away in 1888 at the age of eighty-two. At that time the debt had been reduced from $250,000 to $184,000. In 1896, when it had been brought down to $142,000, the entire property was sold for nearly $600,000, and the present site, Numbers 12 and 14 Beacon Street, was bought for $310,000. The building itself, which was dedicated on Forefathers' Day in 1898, cost $325,000, and the fact is worth preserving that it was built for a sum somewhat less than the original estimates. A mortgage of $212,000 has already been reduced to $189,000. The various benevolent societies are now comfortably housed and in convenient working relations with each other. The library has a fine modern stack, and is growing constantly in size and value. Beginning with "fifty-six books and pamphlets" in 1853, it has now more than 50,000 books and more than 50,000 pamphlets,

besides a multitude of unbound periodicals, with many manuscripts, portraits, and other relics of the past.

Nearly all the rooms in the Congregational House are now occupied, several of them by outside business parties. But if the debt which rests upon the property could be cleared away, it would be difficult to estimate the gain that would accrue to all Congregational work.

This gain would be direct as well as indirect. For instance, during the coming year we shall have to expend $20,000 in round numbers as follows: for interest on the mortgage, $7,000; for sinking fund, $9,000; rebates of rent to the missionary societies, $4,000. But if, during the year, one or more large-hearted Congregationalists should contribute $185,000 to clear off the debt, the whole $20,000 would be saved, and then the goal aimed at from the beginning would be reached — a Congregational House rent-free to all the Congregational Societies.

1853

1903

American Congregational Association

Tremont Temple
May twenty-fifth

American Congregational Association

Mr. William O. Blaney, *President*

Boston Congregational Club

Rev. Charles H. Beale, D.D., *President*

MUSIC

Shawmut Church Choir, Boston

Eliot Church Choir, Newton

Mr. H. M. Dunham, *Director*

...*Programme*...

Music

Prayer — Rev. A. E. Dunning, D.D.

Welcome by the President

Music

Address — Rev. George A. Gordon, D.D.

Music

Benediction

HYMN

O GOD, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home!

Under the shadow of Thy throne
Thy saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is Thine arm alone,
And our defence is sure.

Before the hills in order stood,
Or earth received her frame,
From everlasting Thou art God,
To endless years the same.

Thy word commands our flesh to dust,
"Return, ye sons of men;"
All nations rose from earth at first,
And turn to earth again.

Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly, forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day.

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be Thou our guard while troubles last,
And our eternal home! Amen.

ADDRESS OF WELCOME

In behalf of the American Congregational Association, which I have the honor to represent, it becomes my duty and privilege to extend to you a most cordial welcome, and I also desire to thank you, Mr. President and the members of the Congregational Club, for uniting with us in celebrating this, the fiftieth anniversary of our organization.

When we look back over the past to that meeting which was held in the Old South Chapel fifty years ago today, I feel we should return thanks to Almighty God for raising up those earnest, Christian men who laid the foundation of what has since become a power in our denomination. It might be of interest to many who are present were I to review the history of our Association and tell the story of its struggles during the early days of its existence, but time will not allow me to do so. I will therefore mention only a few of the more important facts and refer you to a fuller statement which has already been published.

The question has often been asked: "What is the American Congregational Association? What is the object of the Association?" I know of no better answer than to quote from Article 2 of the Constitution, which states that "the object of this Association shall be to secure the erection, in the city of Boston, of a Congregational House for the meetings of the body, the accommodation of its library, and for the furtherance of its general purposes; to found and

perpetuate a library of books, pamphlets, and manuscripts, and a collection of portraits and relics of the past; and to do whatever else shall serve to illustrate Congregational history and promote the general interests of the Congregational churches."

The need for such an organization was felt among our churches as early as 1843, and in 1847 Professor Edwards, of Andover, published an article in which he urged the importance and practicability of a "public library and whatever else would serve to illustrate the Pilgrim and Puritan history of New England theology." It was not, however, until May 25, 1853, that the movement took definite shape and the Association formed. Like many great enterprises, it had a small beginning, and one room in Tremont Temple was found of sufficient size in which to hold the meetings of its members and to accommodate its library of fifty-six books and pamphlets; but it soon outgrew these quarters, and in 1857 an estate on Chauncy Street was purchased for the sum of $25,000, upon which a small payment was made.

This building was occupied during the next ten years, when the property was sold and temporary quarters were secured on Winter Street, where the Association remained until it moved into the Congregational House, at the corner of Beacon and Somerset Streets. It was then thought that the Association had found a permanent home, but twenty years later the increase in value of the land upon which it stood made it imperative either to erect a modern building or to sell the property and move to a less expensive locality.

After much discussion by the members, it was finally decided to adopt the latter course, and in 1896, through the efforts of Dr. Samuel B. Capen, to whom the Association owes a lasting debt of gratitude, the property was disposed of and the estate was purchased where our present building stands, "a building," to quote the words of my predecessor, the late Mr. Samuel Johnson, at its dedication, "of which every member is proud, and one that will be known the world over."

Yes, we are proud of our building, and we can say that it is known the world over as the home of Congregationalism, for from this center are sent forth the messengers of our faith with the command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

Surely the seed sown fifty years ago fell into good ground and has multiplied and increased, not thirty, or sixty, or one hundredfold, but one thousandfold. Our little library of fifty volumes now numbers fifty thousand, and the value of our real estate today is more than seven hundred thousand dollars.

I regret to state, however, that there is a debt upon the property, and while it is gradually being reduced, it should, for the credit of our denomination, be paid at once. It is not my purpose, neither is it the time nor the place, to make an appeal for assistance, but if there are any present who believe that it is a "disgrace to die rich," I ask them to remember that here is an opportunity where a generous donation would result in much good, for it would not only relieve the Association of a burden, but it would benefit every benevolent society which occupies the building.

And now, as we pass the fiftieth milestone in our history, rejoicing in what has been accomplished in the past, may we not look forward with hope to the future, believing that the time is not far distant when we can say, there stands the home of our denomination, free from debt or incumbrance, a monument to the founders of our Association, representing the progress of Congregationalism and the principles of the Pilgrim and the Puritan fathers.

DR. GORDON'S ADDRESS

"Remember the days of old,
Consider the years of many generations:
Ask thy father, and he will show thee;
Thine elders and they will tell thee."

"Thence to the famous orators repair."
"To sage philosophy next lend thine ear."

"Remember them that had the rule over you, which spake unto you the word of God, and considering the issue of their life imitate their faith."

"After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude that no man could number."

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yea and forever."

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all."

DENOMINATIONAL MEMORIES AND INSPIRATIONS

George A. Gordon

The American people delight in commemorations. The most radical race in the modern world, they thus disclose a native, a precious, and let us hope an indestructible, conservatism. The nation celebrated with serious joy the centennial of its organization, and thirteen years earlier, the hundredth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, thus lending its high sanction to the habit of our people, and, by national example, encouraging them in the cultivation of an ever larger memory, and an ever juster appreciation of the past. Time subdues passion, induces sane judgment, and brings about great reconciliations. In 1901 Dartmouth College fittingly observes the centennial of the graduation of Daniel Webster, and hardly a voice is heard save in praise of that monumental American. In 1902 Hartford commemorates the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Horace Bushnell, and all good men of all shades of belief unite in grateful recognition of his "great genius, his great character, and his great services to mankind." And while we are gathered here for our own specific purpose, another American of genius, and of enduring fame, is receiving the honor that is his due. Ralph Waldo Emerson belongs to the American people; he has taken his place among the greater forces for good in our national life. When one thinks of these three men, one must exclaim with the Psalmist:

"To him that made great lights:
For his loving-kindness endureth forever."

This instinct for looking backward is an immediate inheritance from the British race. A century passes from the hour when Robert Burns first saw the light, from the hour when he closed his glorious eyes upon the sun, and Scotland takes occasion to appreciate the gift of God in her greatest genius. A century passes from the day that Edmund Burke ended his career of greatness, and the nation that he served with a purity unsurpassed, and with a richness and splendor of power unrivaled, recalls with honor his undying fame. A thousand years pass away from the death of the first English king, and again the English race rise and record their homage to the name of Alfred the Great.

This instinct for commemorations, so potent in our people, so potent in the race from which Americans first drew their being, is a law of human nature, and its strength is a sign of the stability of nations. Twenty-one years ago all enlightened peoples united with Germany in the recognition of the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther; and seventeen years earlier the civilized world did honor with Florence to the immortal name of Dante. Tennyson spoke for contemporary humanity when he sang of this event:

"King, that hast reign'd six hundred years, and grown
In power, and ever growest, since thine own
Fair Florence honoring thy nativity,
Thy Florence now the crown of Italy,
Hath sought the tribute of a verse from me,
I, wearing but the garland of a day,
Cast at thy feet one flower that fades away."

Let the good habit of periodic retrospection grow; let it become fixed. We are fitted to entertain great hopes only as we cherish great memories; even as the rower sits with his face toward the stern of his boat that he may drive the prow forward. In order to be trustworthy, the modern man, especially, must be Janus-faced; one face looking back, the other looking forward, one to behold and conserve the high spirit of the past, the other to greet the new day, the new opportunity, and to employ the purified and extended vision of the generations that are gone, in the service of the generations that are, and that are to be. There is but one kind of retrospect to be deplored, that represented by a certain famous person fleeing from the cities of the plain. There must be no consecration of the limitation, the failure, the weakness, the shame of the past. History holds within its vast domain many a Sodom and Gomorrah, many a consecrated falsehood, many a gray-headed superstition, many eonian outrages upon faith, many millennial inhumanities. Infatuation still consecrates these cities of the plain, and the pillars of salt, the petrified mind and heart, remain the melancholy monuments on all the highways of existence. Tonight we build the sepulchres of the fathers, we garnish the tombs of the prophets; but we do so only in the recognition of the Eternal God in their humanity, only in obedience to the supreme and enduring prophet, Jesus Christ, only in the faith and service of the Holy Ghost.

We celebrate today the fiftieth anniversary of the American Congregational Association. The history of the Association has been written in a manner that

admits of no improvement at my hands. That history is accessible to all. In looking for a theme suitable to this occasion I have been led by the spirit of the Association as indicated in these memorable words of Professor Park: "Let us establish in this City of the Pilgrims, a Pilgrim Hall, that shall contain the writings of our fathers, and of our brethren, and of our successors, and let its walls preserve the portraits of our Cottons, and our Mathers, and our Hookers, and our Emmonses, and our Paysons, and our Hallocks, and our Beechers." The Association has its vision upon the whole denomination, and the Congregational House is its home, the emblem of its interests and ideals, the guide to great memories and to vast hopes. My subject is thus given in the meaning of this hour and my statement of it is, *Denominational Memories and Inspirations.*

The building which is the home of the Association reminds us of the polity of our churches. It is simple, serviceable, in keeping with the plain and solid character of our people. A strange silence has fallen upon us as speakers for our polity. The Presbyterian is not silent, or if he is, it is because he thinks no one can question the superiority of Presbyterianism to all other forms of ecclesiasticism. The Methodist is not silent, or if he is, it is because the thunder of his devotion in God's name to the deepest needs of the nation has drowned even his voice. The Episcopalian is not silent, or if he is, it is because he claims with serene complacency that his church is the church; and, of course, if that is true, there can be no other. It is a strange thing

that has come to pass in this citadel of the Puritan. While other denominations declare through frank and honorable speech the superiority of their forms of government, or assume without discussion as an axiom that superiority, it has somehow come about that among the successors of the Puritans it is deemed narrow, or trivial, or reviving dead issues, or disturbing to the growing unity of the churches, or as exhibiting a deplorable polemic instinct, or as savoring of something almost vulgar for a Congregationalist to enter a plea for his order. It is conceded by our friends, the enemy, that we have had a great history, and it is claimed by the same class of persons that our work is done. Many among us have been so flattered by the praise as to become insensible to the dismay of the judgment upon our future. Meanwhile there are other and more promising signs. There are among us younger men of Puritan fiber who do not think it narrow, or trivial, or reviving dead issues, or as showing a lamentable polemic spirit, or as savoring of something almost vulgar, or as disturbing in the churches any other kind of unity than that which has its type in the progressive assimilation of the lamb inside the lion, that is, of inducing an attack of arrested ecclesiastical digestion, to speak frankly, to plead manfully, and to declare in terms of reason and fact the high claims of the polity of the Pilgrims and the Puritans.

It is sometimes said that our polity lacks compactness, that it has little organization, that it is, therefore, at a disadvantage when compared with other ecclesiastical forms, for purposes of self-preservation and reproduction. This criticism, when taken

in connection with the two great facts of the progressive character of modern life and the democratic character of American institutions, is a mistaken criticism.

The Roman Catholic Church is a marvel of compact organization. In certain countries, and among peoples of a certain grade of intellectual development, this is an advantage. In the modern world it is an enormous disadvantage. Churches need continuous reformation; they need to be in perpetual readjustment to the life of the people. The tragedy of organized Christianity is the steadfast refusal, in the Middle Ages, of the Catholic Church to admit reform. The reformation became a movement outside the Catholic Church. An organization, less complete and severe, might have averted the calamity of disruption.

The same remark may be made, although not with equal force, of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Its organization does not indeed close its doors to the legitimate influence of the modern world. But its order does hold it in alienation from the democratic sympathies of the people of the United States. The Episcopal Church is the child of Imperial Rome; it is the church of the class-organization of society. It is native to England, with her king and her aristocracy, with her ritual of royalty and her love of social distinctions.

The Anglican church in America confronts an enormous initial disadvantage. That disadvantage may be overcome. It has been overcome in many signal instances. Where it has not been overcome it has been mitigated by a shining record of service

to the community. Honor is due to brave men for triumph over initial disadvantages. The name of Phillips Brooks leaps to our lips at the mention in this city of the church that he honored with his great ministry. But it must not be forgotten that, whether with reason or without it, Phillips Brooks appeared in the Episcopal communion as a wonder. How he could do what he did, how he could be what he was, and yet remain an Episcopalian, continued to the end of his existence to be a kind of mystery. The mystery of a mighty democrat in an aristocratic ecclesiasticism was part of the enchantment of his great career. The resolution of the mystery is that Phillips Brooks was a man of genius, and of irresistible popular power; and as in all similar cases, the institution gave way to the man, and not the man to the institution. Like almost all the broad men in the Episcopal Church in America, Phillips Brooks was the descendant of Puritan ancestors; he was born and bred in this city of the Puritans; his nature was alive with the finest traditions and the loftiest ideals of a democratic community; and he took over into the communion in which he chose to do his work, this precious inheritance and the issues of his training in American society. The Episcopal communion has a right to the glory of his career; it was that branch of the church of Christ that gave him his opportunity.

But those charged with the perpetuation of the polity and the principles of the Pilgrims and the Puritans will cherish a strong delusion if they suppose that Phillips Brooks is an accepted exponent of the genius of Episcopacy. For us, after the widest

recognition of the great and honorable service rendered to the kingdom of God in that communion, Episcopacy as an ecclesiastical system reduces itself to two uncompromising denials; first, the denial that our ministry is a valid ministry; second, the denial that our churches are Christian churches. Our ministers are not recognized as such in the fellowship of the Episcopal ministry. When members leave our order for the Episcopal order, letters of dismission and of recommendation are not desired. These persons confess Christ again, as if for the first time. Their confession of the Master in our order, and their ecclesiastical connection with us do not count. When communicants come to us from the Episcopal Church, as they often do, a letter is given not of dismission and of recommendation, but of assurance that the wanderer is a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Thus our ministry is ignored; thus our Christianity is ignored. Ecclesiastical recognition either of our ministry or of our Christian laity on the part of the Episcopal Church there is none.

Against all this the broad churchman is indignant. He is, however, powerless. The genius of his order compels him to obey, overrules his fine instincts, disregards his breadth, ignores his sweet reasonableness, and turns him into a supporter of this strange system. As one has said, the abominable rule must be obeyed. The prevailing churchman does not admit that the rule is abominable. He is here to contest with the Pilgrim and the Puritan, and if he can in honor do it, to take away their name and their nation. He knows that with the advent

of those heroic men on these shores, a new era was opened in the political and religious history of mankind. The democratic church prepared the way for the democratic state; and the democratic state needs the support of the democratic church. The aggressive Episcopalian is swift to note this, and his impatience with our veneration for our Congregational ancestors finds a not unsuitable expression in the frank exclamation of one vigorous churchman, "Instead of the Pilgrims landing on Plymouth rock, would to heaven that Plymouth rock had landed on them!"

For the admission of new light, and for closeness to the order of our national existence, Congregationalism has an immense advantage. The local church is independent. It chooses its own minister, its own officers; it determines what its covenant or creed shall be. It may open its gates to the east and to the west, to the north and to the south. It is shackled by no man, it is hampered by none, it need be kept from progress by none. It may, to be sure, abuse its independence, and thus fall out of fellowship. But the wise and resolute use of its independence will not bring about that result. And so it has come to pass that with only here and there a shock, our Congregational churches have passed safely through the greatest intellectual revolution known to Christian history. They have kept the faith; they have kept faith and pace with progress; they have kept faith with one another. Today they stand in unbroken and in closer fellowship, rejoicing in the freedom and the responsibility of the autonomous church, rejoicing more and more in the com-

munion and coöperation of autonomous churches. The stars have their several and separate orbits. In these they go their several and separate ways. They shine in these paths of freedom; they move in these highways of independence. And out of this independence, because it remains unabused, comes the vast and glorious fellowship of the stars, the clusters and galaxies that constitute the milky way, that symbolize the communion of the saints in glory everlasting, that symbolize the bold independence and the shining brotherhood of the churches of our order.

No church can do its best work that is not in accord with the genius of the people, that is not in harmony with the genius of our political institutions. The second advantage of our polity is equally impressive. We are open to new light, and we are close to the national heart. The people of the United States are democratic in history, in feeling, in institutions, in all their sympathies and in all their ideals. The priestly church, the aristocratic church, is here under immense initial embarrassment. The church that founds its ministry upon manhood, that describes itself as a company of the disciples of Jesus Christ, whose aims are all for the equalization of men before the law, before the human conscience, in human feeling, in social custom, and in the presence of the Infinite, whose spirit is one of intense and abounding humanity, must possess an unmeasured initial advantage with the people of the United States. If we do not succeed it is not because of our polity. If we fail to advance, our ecclesiastical order is not to blame. It is because we are unworthy of our history; it is because we have for-

gotten the price by which our freedom was bought; it is because we are blind to the issue that confronted the Pilgrims, blind to the meaning of their struggle and to the magnificence of their victory. They fought for the primacy of the people, for the ascendency in all human affairs of the human being, for the sovereignty of man under the sovereignty of God. If we fail it will be, not because of a poor polity, but because of deficient manhood; not for want of better organization, but for want of wider sympathies; not because we are without bishops, but because we are without men. Indeed, we are confronted by our greatest opportunity. In the stern days that are upon us, in the terrible epoch of the trial of strength between capital and labor, there is an immeasurable opportunity for the church that appeals to man as man, that is no respecter of persons, that claims Lazarus the beggar as a son of God, that reminds Dives that he is nothing more, and that seeks by the Gospel of the Divine Man to lift human society into the mood and power of brotherhood.

In the Congregational House is the denominational paper, the special guardian of the polity and the principles of the Pilgrims and the Puritans. In my judgment, and I am not a stockholder or a director in it, that paper is one of the broadest and best conducted denominational journals in the country. A denominational paper is often provoking; it is provoking as the preacher is now and then provoking. There is little opportunity to reply, and the journal and the preacher always have the last word. In the expression of his thoughts, and in run-

ning counter to the current of their convictions, the preacher often seems to possess an unfair advantage over his people. The same is true of the paper. On the whole, however, the honest and fearless preacher is forgiven and loved in spite of his exasperating opinions; and the courageous and upright journal is honored and supported notwithstanding its occasional apparent perversity. Think what the pulpit would be if it should sink into a mere echo of the pews. It would be a confusion worse than Babel; for there is less agreement in belief among laymen than among ministers. It would be a disgrace equal to that of Judas; for its salutation of conformity would be but the kiss of the betrayer. If we had no voice for the current thought of the denomination, no influence to reach, in the name of our order, the homes of our people, no medium for the expression of the new ideas and the old, no force for the creation of a common sentiment, and a prevailing public opinion, no organ to represent our history, cherish our traditions, recall our great names, and mediate between those who are a venturesome vanguard and those who constitute a lagging rearguard, we should be poor indeed. Our denominational paper is less in need of our appreciation and support than we are of a just apprehension of the indispensableness of its service.

The religious newspaper represents the large body of ephemeral but powerful writings which come, like the snows of winter, to whiten for a season the fields of human society, which melt and vanish only to leave the soil richer and prepared for a more abundant harvest. Much may be said for the

word that perishes in the utterance of it, for the sermon or pamphlet or article or paper which is read but once, which yet enters into contemporary manhood and womanhood as illumination and inspiration. The vast majority of writers, in all departments of letters, long survive their books. Their lives would be sorrowfully brief if this were not the case. I do not see why religious writers should grieve unduly over this situation. The romance that this year sells by the one hundred thousand in another year will be utterly dead. The overwhelming majority of the issues of the press in fiction have an existence about equal in length and in unhappy power to that of the black flies in the Adirondacks. If our writings in behalf of the faith are true and worthy, if they are in any degree, and for a short time, forces in the intellectual and moral training of the people, why should we mourn their brief existence? They come like the song-birds, and like them they leave; but the memory of their clear and ringing notes abides to strengthen men and women at the great and serious business of living. Literature exists for life. Life is the ultimate wonder, the final glory of the world, and it elects to immortality only an infinitesimal part of the really precious and temporarily indispensable in literature. It is no discouragement to the lover and servant of life that his article, essay, sermon, or book cannot last. If only it may serve for an hour or a season, let it pass. It has done its work, it has gone into the soul of the living world that cannot die.

It would be ill with us had we no contemporary literature. Darwin dies, but Darwin's science lives.

Philosophers die, but the meaning of the universe, to whose unfoldment they made their several contributions, continues to grow and to engage the human intellect. Theologians die, but the work of giving order and vindication to the great ideas of the Christian faith, to which they devoted their power, lives on. In all but a few instances, the written word dies; but that which every true written word serves cannot die. The ideal interest of man, the kingdom of God in time, is great enough to call forth our best utterance whether spoken or written; and we may leave it with our King to determine how long our words shall last, while we console ourselves with the mighty conviction that we stand as servants and as heirs in a kingdom that cannot be shaken.

In the Congregational Building is the library of the Association. It represents a labor of love in its growth from fifty-six books to more than fifty thousand that should not be forgotten. It has been served in love and reverence from its origin to the present hour. It is rich in the peculiar literary treasure of our order, and it contains an increasing collection of rare things gathered from the ends of the earth by pious hands and brought hither for our instruction. The writings of our New England fathers are here. A great body of denominational literature is here. And if it is today little read, if it seems to have little relation to the duty and the peril of the hour, if a strange absence of vitality appears in the thoughts and literary forms of our predecessors, let us be sure that this will not always be the case. One interest is certain to invest more and more these writings, and that is the human interest. Thy dead

men shall live again. For those who look upon these New England fields and hills as invested for more than two hundred years with the heroic humanity of their ancestors, who see the image of kingly men and queenly women burning in the sun that lights the world today, who hear in the murmur of the brook and the sigh of the river the voices that once made glad the holy place of the Most High, and who carry into the depth of nature and into the contemporary world of man the sense of that pathetic, heroic, majestic past, these dead books will live again. It would be sad indeed if while we have imagination and humanity enough to renew out of mud tablets, strange stones, and often the mere débris of art, the vision of vanished races and civilizations we should be unmindful of the great human world whose power is still upon us, whose beauty is the beauty of the Lord our God. An hour in the library of the Association is like an hour in the courts of our God. The silence is a message to the soul; and those shelves with their books tell of large and heroic intellectual power. They tell of a New England in which plain living was accompanied by the zest of high thinking, and of generations of men and women whose hardship and poverty were glorified in the light of an Eternal ideal. Love and marriage, birth and death, the awakening to the glory of true manhood and womanhood, the sad yet heroic struggle, the tragedy of reverse and despair, the victory and the joy of faith; the dark worlds of sorrow transfigured in the burning light of Christian intelligence lie behind those silent and mournful memorials. For imagination and humanity they are alive, and like

the third rail, dangerous to the unwise. Hither let us come to read a little, and to think and dream and love much. The mood of veneration for the past will help to create insight and courage for the present. The Christ who departed most from the Old Testament understood it best, and went back to God with one of its great words upon his lips: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." The true Christian leader is he who works in the sense of the God who was, and who is, and who is to come.

In the library we look upon shining names. There are here names of laymen known all over the land for their character and service. The portrait gallery should be enriched with paintings in oil of these leading laymen. It would be an enduring denominational inspiration to look upon the faces of Alpheus Hardy and Samuel Warren, E. S. Tobey and Ezra Farnsworth, Samuel Johnson and Henry Woods, and of other men of similar strength of character and reach of influence. The power of the layman is a chief distinction in our order. The prophethood, the priesthood, and the kinghood of all believers is the heart of our faith. And when we think of the churches, and of the societies that are the extension of their spirit and power in the country, we are reflecting upon organizations that have come largely from the brain of our laymen, we are regarding organizations whose operation is largely dependent upon the wisdom, and wholly dependent upon the beneficence of laymen. When we look upon the New England churches and colleges, the creation of the voluntary principle, institutions of humanity brought into existence in the day of small things;

when we look at the greatness in influence to which these churches have come, at the authority in the world of science and of letters to which these colleges have risen; and when we reflect that these far-shining centres of love and learning are largely monuments to our Congregational laymen, we begin to apprehend from what high and heroic generations we have come. From our limits in the east to those in the west, and from north to south, the country is dotted over with monuments to the love of knowledge and of sound religion that is the inherited tradition of our laymen, and that in them has become a fundamental and ruling instinct. The sense of the worth of the nation is at the heart of it all, and science and faith, learning and religion, insight and character are for the establishment of the American people in righteousness and hope.

The astonishing gifts of individual men, in these days of fabulous fortunes, are apt to draw attention from the far grander fact, that in days of hardship and penury in the first instance, and later, in the years of humble incomes, our laymen gave of their substance for the creation and endowment of colleges, gave of their substance for the multiplication and support of churches, reserved from their small store a constant and generous contribution for the cultivation of ideal interests, and for the realization of ideal ends. The universities and churches of the old world are largely the product of the state. The people are taxed that these instruments of science and religion may come into existence, and that they may continue in existence. Our ideal in science and in religion is creation and support out of the will of

the people, and in all history there is nothing to surpass, if indeed there is anything to match, this high devotion to ideal interests originating in the enlightened minds and democratic sympathies of New England Congregationalists, and spreading from them, like airs from heaven, over the whole country. Our laymen have been the strength of the church, the vigor of the college, the resource of the nation, the sagacious and resolute organizers of the Christian ideal into the service of the people. All honor to them tonight. For the past fifty years they have never wearied in well-doing, and the highest praise that we can bestow upon the living is that they are worthy of the venerated dead. This is part of our apostolical succession. We are unconcerned about the official continuity of our ministers back to the apostles, unconcerned about our official relation to bishops who claim to date from Peter or Paul or John. That relation through ordination or the want of it is to an enlightened mind a trivial circumstance. About the unbroken succession of our laymen from the centurion who made his great confession in the presence of the dead Christ, and of Joseph of Arimathea who begged Pilate that he might give the dead Master burial; about the unbroken succession of our women from the Syrophœnician mother and from the sisters in Bethany, we are greatly concerned. When we read of Aquila and Priscilla in the New Testament, and in the churches of New England we devoutly pray that their character may repeat itself in all generations. So long as the brotherhood that constitutes the Congregational churches of America shall remain wise and strong, devout and self-denying,

able to control the world, and to turn it in part, at least, into a servant of the Christian ideal, so long shall our order flourish, and go from strength unto strength.

Here as well as anywhere a few words may be said of the societies that have their home in the Congregational House. Our order is a working order. Part of the strength of the denomination is in its intelligence. There is our general theological belief holding in it many of the greatest ideas that have entered human history, and there is the special tradition of high intellectual power. But the vocation of the thinker and believer completes itself in the vocation of the doer. The best book in correction of the difficulties of the mere thinker or believer is Fichte's classic, "The Vocation of Man." The ring of that book is the better music in much of the higher thought of the last hundred years. It lies behind Carlyle's gospel of work; it is a living force in the whole modern recognition of the primacy of will in man.

Our denominational societies are the eyes that search the land, that search the world for the needs of men and the opportunities of the gospel; the eyes to discover human want and the arms to bring together the hunger of the soul and the bread of life. More than all else these societies proclaim that we are a working denomination, that we are doers of the word of God for the city, the commonwealth, the nation, and the race; that as Christians we are citizens, patriots, and men; that we regard the entire ideal treasure in our Lord as a guide and inspiration in the service of humanity. Nothing more deserves

our devotion than these societies. Nothing is more alarming than their decline, nothing more signally proves our denominational vitality than their increase in power. That the wisest and best of our people support and love them, that they thank God for the expressions and powers of the churches which they are, bringing together the needs near and remote and the saving strength of our faith, is surely one of our profoundest inspirations.

Among the multitude of names of ministers suggested by a visit to the library of the Association I select four for special mention. The first is Edwards A. Park, preacher, teacher, scientific theologian, leader here in Massachusetts for an entire generation in every great interest of the churches of our order.

In looking back upon the career of this remarkable man, it is essential to bear in mind that in common with the generation to which he belonged, he became involved in the most surprising and radical revolution in Christian history. We shall utterly fail in justice to our great predecessors if we overlook this supreme fact. Here and there indeed a seer escaped the doom that overtook suddenly, as a thief in the night, an entire generation of scholars, thinkers, teachers, and preachers; here and there an original mind anticipated the coming change, and, like a wise sailor, caught its power with all sails set. It was otherwise with the mass of even able and noble men. A new view of nature, a new sense of history, a new conception of literary and historical criticism, a new application of scientific method, and the sub-

PROF. EDWARDS A. PARK

jection to critical consideration of every human interest, a new consciousness of the work of the great historic thinkers of mankind, and the entrance of theology into the arena of philosophic debate, with a fair field and no favor, brought about, within the space of a decade, an incredible change in the world of thought. Men who were in the vanguard in 1870, found themselves in the rearguard in 1880. When these men saw their work as scholars discredited, their methods as Biblical interpreters disowned, their systems of theology built up with immense ability and devotion wholly disregarded, it is not strange that they lost their finest temper, that they failed in sympathy with the new era, that they grew, in some instances, hostile and bitter to younger men, that they set themselves with Herculean strength to avert what they regarded as a calamity. That new order could not be averted. It is in vain that the strongest stand in the path of the inevitable. Edmund Burke could not arrest that insurrection of humanity — the French Revolution, and Daniel Webster could not suppress the burning assertion of the Puritan conscience in the presence of human slavery. Prayers and imprecations may do much, but they cannot control the dawn or hold back the rising sun. The new era came with the sudden and quiet might of daybreak, smiling serenely in the face of opposition, and men who had hitherto conquered and controlled everything were smitten helpless as from the bow of Apollo. We must antedate this hour of unhappy opposition to the progress of the world, we must go back to the earlier time, if we would do justice to the men of heroic size who led thought and who inspired life in the generation preceding our own.

Professor Park represents that large class of conservative men whose merit is likely to be unrecognized on account of their want of relation to our time. He was of his class easily the first. He knew the New England churches, the New England ministry, the New England theology and the earlier New England character and traditions as few men have ever known them. He was a preacher unequaled in his order, one whose great sermons became traditions of power in all the denominations, and among all types of belief. Men will differ in their judgments about such matters as they do about everything else; still I am inclined to think that the greatest sermon ever preached in Boston, — greatest for immediate impression upon one of the most intellectual audiences ever assembled in the city, and for its recognition of the function of life in theology, — was Professor Park's discourse on "The Theology of the Intellect and the Theology of Feeling." The sermon was preached in 1850, in the old Brattle Street church, before the Convention of Congregational Ministers of Massachusetts. Among those who heard it, Unitarians and Trinitarians alike, there was but one conviction concerning it, and that was of its transcendent power. Professor Park was then in his forty-second year, and if he had allowed his thought in that great discourse to control and shape his entire teaching, instead of being the last of the old order of theologians he would have become the first of the new. If he had utilized his insight that the content of genuine Christian feeling is an eternal content, while the theories of the intellect chase each other, in their discovered inadequacy

as philosophy, like shadows over the summer grass; if he had turned the intellect upon the deposit of faith laid up in the Christian heart, stored in the Christian consciousness, treasured in the soul of Christ; if he had allowed the enlightened conscience to cleanse the Augean stable of the mediæval understanding, Edwards A. Park would have stood for the dawn of a new day in American theology. The promise of all this burned in the eloquence of that sermon; a promise unfulfilled by Park, but now receiving fulfillment by the men who have entered into his labors.

Upon serious subjects Professor Park was probably the greatest teacher that we have ever had. He made preachers, and filled the pulpits of the land with them. In the power of creating enthusiasm for the calling of the preacher he has never been excelled. He was a master in the realm of thought. He gave to New England divinity an expression which for ingenuity and dialectical force has never been surpassed. He was a tireless promoter of all forms of sacred learning, and eagle-eyed in the recognition of young men of promise. Scores of the men who afterwards became scholars of national fame, and who grieved their teacher by undermining or shelling the forts that he had constructed, were frank in the confession that Professor Park first inspired them with the scholar's enthusiasm and directed them in the selection of the subjects in which they rose to authority.

This fascinating man has another distinction. He was a master in the delineation of character. Here his sermon on Moses Stuart may well serve

as a model. Nothing could well be finer than its appreciation and its honest and yet reverent indication of limitations. His biographies of Samuel Hopkins and Nathaniel Emmons are unique in the class of literature to which they belong. Professor Park had an eye for a heroic character, a vision that took, with immense vividness, the image of the great personality in its leading features and in its significant detail. He possessed in a remarkable degree the historical imagination, and where his sympathies were keenly enlisted, working as they did through an intellect of sleepless critical activity, the result was a portrait of a kingly person drawn to the life. His biographies never sink into blind adulation. They are never mere appreciations. As a delineator of character he had the fear of God before his eyes. He does not idealize his hero out of all relation to the facts and the characteristics of his career. He sees the real hero, and has the good sense to know that in the lights and shadows, in the colors gay and gray, brilliant and dark, are the materials for an authentic portrait of the great man, and one immeasurably more potent than that which uncritical homage and unchastened imagination can paint.

Professor Park was a man memorable for his wit, his humor, his sarcasm; a man from whom came, for a generation, the larger part of all the good stories, and a considerable portion of the keenest comments on current affairs. He constructed out of anecdote a ritual of humor, and one could wish that the ritual might become record. It must be confessed that this great man had bitter prejudices; but outside the circle of these sad infirmities, a more accomplished gen-

tleman one could not meet. He was absolutely free from vanity, clean of every form of vulgar egoism, ready to give and ready to receive the flow of wit and of wisdom.

Professor Park was an imperial personality. In his presence even extraordinary men looked undistinguished. Lacking indeed a rich nature, wanting in originality, entirely without the gifts and the sympathies of the seer, he was the incarnation of keen intellect, logical alertness, dialectical skill; and he was this in thorough accord with his native bent, and in the highest degree of accomplishment — in disciplined, compact, commanding character. Let us be magnanimous toward the mighty. The Greeks did not forget Achilles because of his wrath; they even found in that wrath an epical significance. Let us recall tonight the Achilles of our camp, his well-proportioned and towering figure, his finely molded head, his eagle features, — their keenness, their force, and their fire; his voice of melody and command, his intelligence, filling, shaping, swaying his whole being, the impassive face and the avalanche of humor, or wit, or sarcasm, or critical remark, the iron will that would have made him the first of stoics, the loyalty to his convictions that enabled him to confront and fight almost single-handed a revolution in belief, the composure and the uncomplaining fortitude of the fighter, his high disdain as of an eagle in defeat, his unfailing dignity, his unembittered and unbroken spirit, his imperial manhood. The portrait of this man, could we but find one with skill to paint it, would add to the distinction of any hall of fame.

The most famous pupil of Professor Park was Richard Salter Storrs, of Brooklyn. His death is so recent, and the place that he filled in the denomination up to the very close of his career was so large, that it is unnecessary that I should do more than refer to his brilliant name. He belonged to a class of men of whom there are now no survivors. Edward Everett, Rufus Choate, and Richard Salter Storrs were orators formed upon the Roman model; and of the three I am inclined to put Storrs first. Ciceronian eloquence is not native to Americans, and it required a rare conjunction of gifts in the man who mastered it, and who made it a power in the free and unconventional life of this republic of the west. To Dr. Storrs men would listen for hours; and a good example of this enduring spell of the orator over his audience is furnished by the remark of Mr. Beecher to his neighbor, after a wonderful address in the Academy of Music: "Brother Storrs, for the first hour and a half I thought you were going to be dull."

Dr. Storrs could be surpassingly effective and brief at the same time. It will be long before his remarks made at the meeting held in New York in 1893, in memory of Phillips Brooks, are forgotten. Old man as he was he rose to the occasion, and in that meeting there was much that was fine and thrilling, but nothing to match the splendid eloquence of this master. Nor will another brief speech of his soon fade from the memory of those who heard it, when in a hot municipal campaign against corruption, he called for a public opinion so sharp and swift that it might act upon these robbers of the people

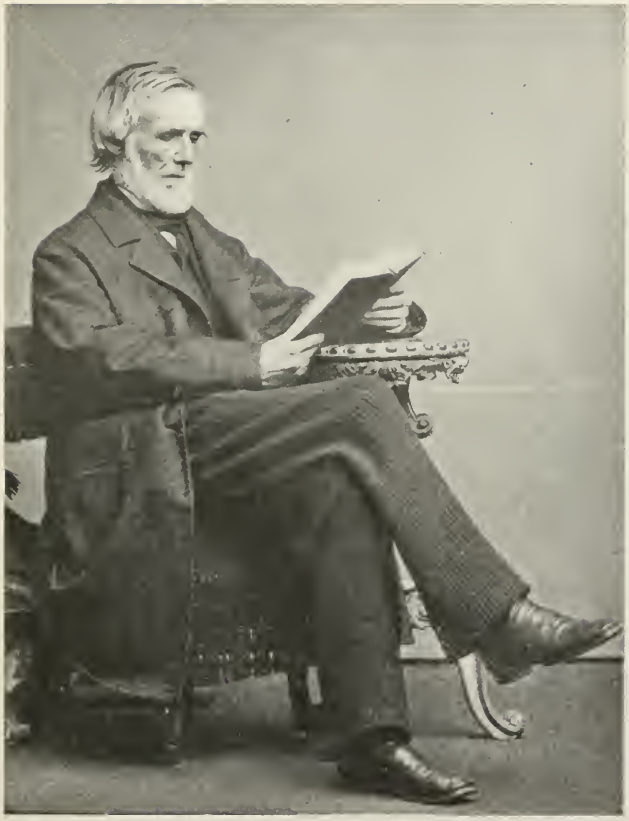
REV. RICHARD S. STORRS

as a certain sword which passed so quickly and completely through the neck of a villain that he did not know that he had been decapitated until he tried to swear and could not. And again at the meeting of the American Board in Minneapolis, when troubles were many, he touched the situation with characteristic frankness and grace when he referred to the person who carried a kind of cement that would mend anything, from the crack of a teacup to the break of day.

Dr. Storrs did not see the significance of the scientific movement of his age, nor did he interest himself in the modern view of the Bible. His tastes and sympathies did not carry him into the companionship of the great philosophical minds of the race, nor did he look for a better theological expression of Christianity than that found in the New England divinity. These were doubtless limitations. They serve to define and frame the figure of this commanding preacher. He was a scholar, a patrician in nature, in thought, in taste, and in culture, and at the same time a man of strong and just character. He was a person of wide and accurate historical learning, alive with the sense of beauty in nature and in art, one whose mental operations were an incarnation of the law of artistic excellence, whose speech at its best had the elevation of ancient litanies, whose illustrations of truth had in them the fiery scope and splendor of sunsets. He was largely and honorably useful as a mediator in times of denominational distress; he was for more than a generation a proud distinction in our order; and as a rhetorician and an orator of the antique type he

stands without a rival in the history of American Christianity. When in one of his elaborate similes, his imagination found in the movement of the stars a slow assumption of the form of the cross, he was revealing the central thought and enthusiasm of his own heart. For him the cross of Christ was the symbol of the soul of the universe; the token of man's refuge and hope.

Contemporary with Edwards A. Park was Horace Bushnell. He divided with Park the theological leadership of the churches of our order in New England. He was a man of original insight, a diviner of meanings deeper and more vital than those found in the forms of the current orthodoxy, a pioneer in doctrinal investigation, a creative mind in the realm of Christian belief. His career and his character are part of the treasure of the denomination. The denomination gave him his freedom, and it supplied that inspiration of antagonism without which no man can do his best work. There is a divine reason for the presence in Jerusalem, when Nehemiah attempts to rebuild the wall, of Sanballat and his set. There is a divine reason for the presence of Sanballat in New England, in New England Congregationalism, in Christian history. Job could not arrive at his best without the tormenting Satan, and Jesus reached the full maturity of his Messianic consciousness through his victorious battle against the Adversary. Dualism must not be allowed as an ultimate fact; there is but one original and eternal fountain of being. But short of the intolerable extreme of a dualistic universe, there may well be



REV. HORACE BUSHNELL

a dualism of history. The stream of the Divine benignity divides with the birth of time and the advent of life, and the coming of man into two branches — one stands for the sympathy and the other for the high hostility of the universe. Into the order of human society, into the order of nature, into the order of the universe, as it affects the temporal life of man, is wrought the Adversary: Behold the goodness and the severity of God.

In the world of religious faith, as elsewhere, the opposing forces of conservatism and radicalism act and react on each other, and progress is the issue of the collision. All that Bushnell said was not true; all that his opponents said was not untrue; and in the high combat between the solitary man of genius and the multitude of average minds, while we thank God for the great seer, let us think kindly of those persons who, by their antagonism, brought his message to a fruitful issue, who drove him deeper in upon God, and who called forth the profoundest and the best that was in him. The denomination did distrust Horace Bushnell. Many thought that he had no place in it. Much bitterness was leveled against him; much trouble was given him. But after all, his denomination stood by him. It gave him his opportunity. Into its ministry he poured the treasure of his life, and through it his influence has gone to the ends of the earth.

Horace Bushnell is an engaging character. The stress of his soul in the storms that raged about him during the larger part of his career, the candor of the man, his flawless honesty, his profound and habitual religiousness, the romance that he found in liv-

ing, the way in which he took his nature and employed it in the discovery and in the realization of truth, his unclouded sense of an ideal world, his vast faith, his great and tender love combined with the most fearless courage and the most splendid fighting qualities; his deep and earnest eyes, his noble head, and at last its shock of white hair, his face, with the feeling of eternity and of solemn triumph engraven upon it, make him for thoughtful men and women a hero of the faith of imperishable worth and charm.

Henry Ward Beecher was the greatest preacher for the people that our order has produced; in my judgment, he was the greatest preacher for the people that America has produced. He was not a theologian like Park; he was not a scholar and rhetorician like Storrs; he was not a profound original mind like Bushnell; but in his own distinctive excellence he was immeasurably beyond them. Educated in his father's house, in college, and in early associations in the formal doctrines and nice distinctions of New England theology, he was well fitted to discover in the service of the church the limitations of his inherited belief. In his day the material did not exist for the reconstruction of theology. Intuitions and emotions, the witness of the great instincts of the soul and the experience of the heart, are what one finds in Beecher. One is sometimes disappointed not to find in him the modern view in its integrity. But to condemn him for this failure would be an unjust judgment. He was among the first in our order to reject the New England Calvinism. He did not

REV. HENRY WARD BEECHER

put a new scheme in the place of the rejected scheme. For that the time was not ripe; for that service Beecher had not the power. He had a glorious vision of the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. He knew sonhood in his own nature; he was a true son. He knew fatherhood as few have ever known it. He had a great nature, and guided by the humanity of Christ, he sought God through his whole manhood. Here is the source of his doctrine. Christianity is the revelation of God through the divine humanity of Jesus, and Beecher took his own great human soul and reached through the divine humanity of his Master to the eternal humanity of the God and Father of men.

Beecher's teaching was the surprise of the nation in its richness, in its simplicity, in its fascination, and in its amazing vitality; and when we think of it as pervaded by the widest play of emotion, as filled by a voice of wondrous compass, melody, and intelligence, as presented by a genius for natural expression absolutely unequaled, and by a personality of heroic vigor and charm, we can imagine how his name became over the whole land a household word. When we add to all this that he was one of the earliest and bravest of the anti-slavery orators; that he had a genius unsurpassed in any preacher for the moral appreciation of political life; that the honor of his country was as close to him as that of his own home, and that the supreme single service of his career was the revolution of opinion which he created in Great Britain in favor of the North in the great civil conflict, — a revolution of opinion accomplished in the face of almost impossible opposition; a revolution begun and carried

forward by his indomitable courage before howling mobs, a courage that could not be intimidated, that could not be exhausted, that could not be betrayed into ill temper, that clothed itself in genial humor, in withering irony, in silencing disclosures of the hollowness and hypocrisy of Great Britain's friendship for the South, that wrought by infinite tact and infinite patience, by every form of eloquence from the play of the conversational note to the rolling thunders of impassioned declamation, and by as splendid an exhibition of the power of speech over popular and maddened assemblies as was ever witnessed in the annals of mankind, it is small wonder that this man became the hero, the idol, of the American people. If the shadow of shame had not fallen upon him, if his good name had not been clouded by a vast and subtle slander, if his sun had gone down clear and full after the glorious brightness of the day, instead of blazing a path through storms and thunder clouds, there would have been no name in the annals of the American pulpit to put in comparison with that of Henry Ward Beecher. It is with inexpressible thankfulness that all good people behold the vast shadow that once rested upon him lifting, and we may hope that his great soul may yet come forth clear as the sun, fair as the moon, and for all the hosts of wicked men, terrible as an army with banners. What could Benjamin do when the cup was found in his sack? Could he prove that he was not a thief? Could he do other than await the revelation and vindication that time and the truth of things would surely bring? Such, in my judgment, was Beecher's case. The cup found in his sack had been put there by malign men.

The evidence against him was manufactured, — lied into existence by word and deed. What could he do, what could any man do, but confront and defy it, and abide the righteous revelations of time?

Beecher's eloquence was of orchestral variety and fullness. He spoke with the inevitableness and ease of nature. He could storm and thunder; and he could utter, in the lowest and sweetest notes, the infinite compassions. Not his indignation, although that was grand; not his humor, although that was without guile; not his didactic address, although that was surpassingly clear; not his great enthusiasm, although that was instinct with high contagion; but his pathos, his deep-hearted sympathy, his wondrous tenderness, the incomparable way in which he carried the wounded spirit back into the divine consolation, was his supreme power. He could comfort men with a marvelous range of sympathy, he could comfort a continent, as when Abraham Lincoln fell, from his own great heart. And when in this human orchestra the rolling of the drum ceased, and the blast of the cornet was suspended, and the gay music of the violin was held up, and the soft notes of the solitary flute floated, as from heaven, into the soul of the congregation, one can imagine, but cannot describe, the magic, the mystery, of this man's speech.

These four men do not exhaust the kinds of power in our order. They do not include the technical scholar, like Moses Stuart and Joseph Henry Thayer; nor influential writers upon polity, like Dexter and Quint; nor denominational leaders, like Leonard Bacon; nor evangelists, like Charles G. Finney and

Dwight L. Moody; nor ministers, of the peculiar grace of Edward N. Kirk or the social charm of George W. Blagden; nor preachers, of the type of Nehemiah Adams and Leonard Swain and Austin Phelps; nor pastors and teachers, of the unique genius of George W. Field; nor men of heroic mold, like A. L. Stone and J. M. Manning, who surrendered their pulpits to serve with their regiments in the hour of their country's peril, and who afterwards resumed them to fill them with high thinking and the power won through personal sacrifice and suffering; nor the great army of servants in our missionary societies at home and abroad. Still, these four men may serve to remind us of the richness and the breadth of the denomination. There is room in it for the scientific theologian of conservative habit; there is room for the splendid orator; there is a place in it for the seer whose premises are first principles, and the issues of whose radicalism none but the Holy Spirit can forecast; and he belongs in it who is the highest incarnation of the genius of preaching. In these four names we may well behold the nameless host of the servants of Christ in our churches whom they recall. "The Lord hath wrought great glory by them through his great power from the beginning. There be some of them that have left a name behind them; and some there be which have no memorial; who are perished as though they had never been. But these were merciful men, whose righteousness hath not been forgotten. Their bodies are buried in peace, but their name liveth evermore. The people will tell of their wisdom, and the congregation will show forth their praise."

It has been an inspiration to look backward. Is it an inspiration to look forward? Our denominational societies are increasing in wisdom and in power. Our contemporary literature is as vital and serious as at any period of our history. Our laymen are alive to the religious need of the nation; they are worthy of those whose places they fill. Our ministry is an educated ministry, open to the teaching of the time, honest, straightforward, devout, self-denying, the joyous servant of the Christian ideal. But men are subject to the mood of their age. A new mood has arisen; it fills the educated world; it reaches the entire intelligence of the time. Is this new mood for better or for worse? What of the future of our faith at its hands? What of the future of those beliefs that have hitherto been the perennial fountain, or at least the indispensable channel of our greatest inspirations? Are we permitted now to work and to feel as of old? Are we forbidden to think as of old? How long can work and feeling go forward when thought has lost its hold upon the Eternal? Does the change in thought mean only a vaster thought and thus a profounder feeling, and a mightier activity for Christian righteousness? In the new mood of the age are we confronted, like ancient Israel, by a possible blessing and a possible curse? In our hope and in our fear is there balm in Gilead? Is there a physician there? The intellectual world, the spiritual world, the Christian world is in movement. Whither is it bound? Who is its leader and Lord? When the sea breaks its immemorial bounds is there any law or force upon which one may look for the control of the fearful flood? When Christian

scholars, teachers, preachers, disciples of the Lord have, in one degree or another, abandoned immemorial traditions is there any Guide on whom we may rely for the conservation of the best in history, and for the control and happy issue of the whole daring movement of man's spirit?

There is indeed much confusion today in the field of belief, and much need of patience. You have dedicated to the ministry of Christ the son whose entire existence has been covered by your prayers. You have sent him to college, and there he has stood in the heart of the world's great debate between theism and atheism, a knowable God and an unknowable, history as an optimism and history as the interminable desert of despair. In college he has been trained to think, to question every affirmation, to try the spirits that he might know their worth. Is it strange that under this discipline, — and there is no other discipline that is intellectually decent, — your son should come forth with a high spirit, a vigorous understanding, and a somewhat attenuated body of belief? You send this son to the divinity school. The mood of the age is still with him. If it is not, send him anywhere rather than to that inferno of the spirit. In the modern seminary he stands in the heart of the great debate about the Bible. How came the Old Testament to be what it is? How came the New Testament to be what it is? How much is authentic history? How much, if any, is myth or legend or the accretion of the creative imagination of after times? In answer to these questions your son hears a multitude of conflicting tongues, and Babel itself seems peaceful and beautiful order com-

pared to this unsilenceable and endless uproar. Again is it strange that your son, when he presents himself for ordination as a minister of Jesus Christ, should be somewhat uncertain, and perhaps unsatisfactory, in his statement of faith? You cannot blame him. You know the honor of his soul, you know the integrity of his intellect, you know the deep and tender veneration of his heart for his Master, you know that he stands ready to confess him in service and in sacrifice and unto tears and blood. You cannot blame him. Why should you blame his teachers? Why should you blame anyone? The mood of the age is upon us all. Whither shall we go from its spirit, or whither shall we flee from its presence? If we take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall the mood of the time confront us. If we ascend up into heaven it is there; if we make our bed in hell it is there. It is with us in the darkness and in the light. It is the shadow of God in the mind of educated man. And as the shadow of God we must behold it, we must implore for its meaning, we must beg for its name.

The profoundest meaning of the vast and restless mood that is upon us, I believe to be the divine intention to throw us back upon God, the Holy Ghost. If natural law seems to be inviolable, if there appears to be no longer any room left for miracle, it is that the whole creation may appear miraculous, the garment that God is weaving for himself on the roaring looms of time, under the eyes of the living. For a few miracles, hard to grasp, we are bidden behold a miraculous universe, where all things depend upon, where all things reveal, the mystery of the Infinite

will. No man is intellectually justified in denying the miracles of Jesus; he does not know enough to deny. No man has a right to make the glory of Christianity depend upon the miracle. Does the fourth Gospel mean nothing in setting the life of Jesus into the life of the world, and back into the life of the universe, and up into the life of the Eternal God, without the aid of miracle? Consider which is the grander, the story of the incarnation according to Luke, or the same story according to John.

If the Bible appears to be no longer an infallible book, it is that men may come to know the Divine inspirer of it. The Bible seems to me to have gained immeasurably in the process of scientific examination. The humanity of the Bible is monumental; and this monumental humanity enables us to lay hold with new assurance of the Eternal humanity. "The burdens of the Bible old" are still out of the Infinite. In the lyric and epic utterance of supreme souls one still hears the accent of the Holy Ghost. In the oracle of the prophet, in the epistle of the apostle, and in the eternal wisdom and tenderness of the teaching of Jesus, we still rise as on wings into the presence of the Most High. Theories about the Bible are born and die like the swarms of insects in summer; but the Bible in its really great books remains what it has always been, the monumental witness to the presence in man of the Holy Ghost. If we live in God we shall see that the Bible lives in God; if God lives in us we shall know that God lives in the Bible.

Even the uncertainty about the person of Jesus Christ, which I so much deplore, seems to me to be,

in a way, providential. "It is expedient for you that I go away;" so spoke the Lord. The religion of Jesus Christ is, after all, the religion of the Holy Ghost. The church is the church of the risen Lord. The church began in the consciousness of the risen and reigning Christ. It can never be, without outrage upon history, without revolt from Christian reason, the church of the dead Christ. With this fountain of organized Christianity sure, with this consciousness rising and terminating in the Lord who abolished death, we have nothing to fear. Behind that, below that, sane criticism cannot go. And with this consciousness as channel, there comes in upon us, if we will but open the gates, the floods of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit thus becomes the hope of the church. If we have the Holy Spirit, he will guide us into all truth; he will recover to faith and life the truth that the church may from time to time lose. Thinking, believing, doing, living in the strength of the Holy Ghost — there is no hope save in that experience; and for the soul and for the church in that experience, there is nothing but hope. What if all the criticism and uncertainty of the age shall prove a divine discipline toward this issue? What is the final beatitude for man but that he shall live and move and have his being, full of love and awe, in God? For what do we hope but that the tabernacle of God shall be with men? For what do we long when, in the language of the Apocalypse, we behold the holy city, the New Jerusalem, with no temple therein, save the soul of God omnipresent and omnipotent, in the social life of the race? The outgoing mariner leaves much behind. The dear

shores fade from his sight; the beloved land sinks deeper and deeper under the horizon. But these shores and that land do not cease to be; they remain part of the order of the world, and the buoyant and benign sea goes with him, floating him with its joyous floods, and fanning him with its strong winds, until he anchors in the harbor whither he is bound. The recorded gospel, the recorded Christ, we leave behind as the swift years roll, as the great centuries pass. That divine life in Galilee and in Judea is far away from our time. We may weep that it is forever receding from the successive generations of men; but we must not forget that it is part of the history of the race, that it is the abiding and the supreme human memorial, and the glorious deep of the Holy Ghost goes forward with us; it is under the keel of the church. Its currents are all toward good. Its winds are the prevailing forces in all progress; and with this element under us, and with these inspirations behind us, filling the sails of faith, and blowing into white heat the great furnaces of love, we have everything to hope and nothing to fear. The secret of existence for the individual Christian and for the whole body of Christians is in a life in the life of God; in a life that cannot be plucked out of his hand, that cannot be torn from fellowship with him. The Christ of yesterday and the Christ of tomorrow are in the keeping of the Christ of today. The divine past and the divine future are safe, utterly safe, when held in the divine present. "God is our refuge, a present help in time of trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed and the sea roar and be troubled." Go forward in God and you

shall not faint; go forward in him and you shall not fear. The planet goes forever forward, but it takes with it its atmosphere; and when the storms are still, it looks through that atmosphere, as through a vast window, upon the numberless shining worlds among which it rolls. Let the moving church take with it the faith, the experience, the protection, the infinite gift of the Holy Ghost. Let it roll forward in the heart of this mystery of encasing deity; let it view all worlds of science and art and philosophy and government, all the shining moods of human culture, and all the blasted survivals of departed glory, through the infinite transparency and peace of the Eternal Spirit. The church that shall journey onward, rolled in the atmosphere of the Holy Ghost, shall continue living, fruitful, beautiful, and to it God shall disclose more and more of the splendor of his universe.

DATE DUE

MAR 1 2 2002

GAYLORD

PRINTED IN U.S.A

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
0038640570

BRITTLE DO NOT
PHOTOCOPY